

## DEVOTION OF THE MONTH



## AUGUST Month of the Immaculate Heart

The Church dedicates the month of August to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is a dogma of the Catholic faith that Mary is the Immaculate Conception; that is, in preparation for the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity in her womb, she was conceived without the corruption of sin through the foreseen and infinite merits of her Son, Jesus Christ.

Over the centuries, as saints and theologians reflected on how Mary pondered and treasured the sacred events from the life of Christ in her holy heart, as attested in Scripture, her pure heart was recognized as something to be imitated. Devotion to Our Lady's purity of heart began to flower so much so that in the 17th century, St. John Eudes promoted it alongside the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The devotion rose to a new level after the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, when Mary revealed an image of her Immaculate Heart to Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco.

## **THE QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - 22 AUGUST**

In the mystery of the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven, Mary receives her splendid reward: to be in glory with her Son. Her words in the Magnificat are now fulfilled in heaven: “For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me...” (Luke 1:48-49).

Our Lady's rank as Queen of Heaven is beyond human understanding. We can imagine her queenship in human terms, but the heavenly reality of her radiant glory is—like that of her Son—beyond earthly experience.

Mary is our Queen, and yet despite her heavenly radiance, she always remains our tender and devoted mother, willing and able to intercede for us to Jesus Christ.

To understand Our Lady's role in the heavenly kingdom of God, we must understand the role that queens, and queen-mothers, had in the earthly Kingdom of Israel. The royal practices of Israel's kings is the lens through which the Apostles would have understood Jesus' relationship with Mary.

The kingdom of Israel was established because Israel desired to be “like all the [other] nations,” even though God desired to be their single king (1 Samuel 8:19-20). God relented and allowed them to have a king, and ultimately allowed the kingship to prepare His people for the coming of His Son, the Eternal King, Jesus.

Yet there is something important to note about Israel's monarchy: the Israelites did not hail the king's wife as queen, but rather his mother.

The First Book of Kings (2:19-20) described the court of King Solomon, the wisest of Israel's kings, and the place of his mother, Bathsheba, within it.

*Then Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him...and the king stood up to meet her and paid her homage. Then he sat down upon his throne, and a throne was provided for the king's mother, who sat at his right. She said, “There is one small favor I would ask of you. Do not refuse me.” The king said to her, “Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you.”*

This short passage packs implicit volumes about Israel's court protocol and power structure. First, we see that the queen mother was approaching her son in order to speak on behalf of another person. This confirms what we know about queen mothers in other Near Eastern cultures... she was considered an intercessor, or advocate, for the people.

Next, we notice that Solomon rose from his throne when his mother entered the room. This makes the queen mother unique among the royal subjects... even the king's wives were required to bow before him (1 Kings 1:16). Yet Solomon rose to honor Bathsheba. Moreover, he showed further respect by bowing before her and by seating her in the place of greatest honor, at his right hand. Undoubtedly, this describes a court ritual of Solomon's time; but all ritual expresses real relationships...

Though technically Solomon was Bathsheba's superior, in the orders of both nature and protocol he remained her son.

This ritual—and the real filial love that they show to us—only scratches the surface of the queen mother's importance. She was a political advisor, an intercessor for the king's petitioners, and the king's most trusted subject; only she could be counted on at all times to be frank and honest with the king and to look out for his interests—all with steadfast, maternal dedication.

The New Testament answers the Old Testament, pointing to a new heavenly queen to accompany Christ the Heavenly King. In the Book of Revelation (12:1-6), St. John the Apostle writes to the Christian people about Mary, whom he loved as his own mother:

*And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. And another sign appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads; His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished...*

The woman described in Revelation is clearly the Mother of the Messiah, who rules the whole earth. The twelve stars of her crown are the twelve tribes of Israel, showing that this woman, this mother, is crowned as queen of the New Israel, just as her Son is the King of God's kingdom.

Furthermore, St. John writes that “the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandment of God and bear testimony to Jesus” (Revelation 12:17). Those who keep God's commandments are the woman's children with Christ our Brother. As she reigns in Heaven, clothed with the sun and the stars, Mary is our mother too.

Mary will advocate for us to her Son. She is crowned with heavenly glory, but she remains Jesus' tender mother. Through the work of her Son, Mary has adopted us as her children as well. She advocates for us with the King of Heaven, and she acts as mediator between us and the throne. As Queen of Heaven, she works tirelessly for the good of all her children, bringing about the will of her Son the King: our eternal unity with God.

## **CHURCH REOPENING**

As of now there is nothing new to report. Weekend Masses have been going smoothly. Our ushers have been essential to this working so well.

For safety's sake, as well as fitting the maximum number of people in the church possible under current restrictions, all must be seated by the ushers. The ushers are present at least 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass to assist you. Please note that once we have reached capacity we cannot let you in the building. As more and more people begin to return to Mass, you may find that arriving 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of Mass is not early enough. First come, first served.

Just as a reminder:

Those who are sick or vulnerable due to age or health conditions are strongly encouraged to remain at home and view the Mass on television or online.

**The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains in effect indefinitely.**

Please continue to consult the parish website ([www.steas.org](http://www.steas.org)) for updates and changes.

I appreciate your kindness and patience as we try to implement the laws and directives that we must follow from both State government and Diocesan regulation.

*“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them, every day begin the task anew.”*

— St. Francis de Sales

## **OFFICE REOPENING**

As of July 1, 2020, the office is open to get Mass cards and drop off paperwork and other things during new summer business hours.

Monday - Thursday from 9:30AM to 12:30PM and 1:30PM to 4:00PM.

Outreach will continue to operate on an appointment only basis.

Remember, if you are not yet comfortable being out in public, we have also been handling parish business via phone and email and we can accommodate you that way if you wish.

## ON RECEIVING COMMUNION

We have just celebrated the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, where by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the hands of the priest, God changes the bread and wine into the Real Presence of Christ. In light of returning to the reception of Holy Communion at public Masses, I present these points about the proper way to receive Holy Communion.

- We are supposed to observe a one-hour Eucharistic fast. This means that we do not eat or drink anything except water or medicine for one hour before receiving Holy Communion. There should be no gum chewing; we should get rid of gum before we enter church. Also, coffee cups and the like, other drinking containers, and other items of the sort are not appropriate to bring into church.
- If you are receiving the Body of Christ in the hand, one hand is to be underneath the other, with both hands flat (not curled up) and hands up held up high. There is to be no grabbing of the Host. Hands must be washed, clean, and sanitized. Gloves are not to be worn.
- If you have received the Body of Christ in the hand, with your right hand **immediately** place the Host in your mouth; do not begin to walk away with it. Proper reverence for the Sacred Species demands that it be consumed **immediately** and not carried around. We do not bless ourselves with the Host or any other act of personal devotion. While I am sure well intentioned, this is a sacrilege. It goes **immediately** into your mouth. In addition, if you see someone walking around with a Host, say something.
- Holy Communion is not a “take-home” and it is not to be kept on your person or brought back to the pew or worse brought outside and left on the windshield of a car (yes, this has happened). If you see this, say something.
- If you are receiving the Body of Christ on the tongue, you must tilt your head back slightly, open your mouth and stick out your tongue, and close your eyes. Do not expect the minister to have to maneuver to place the Host in your mouth - please stick out your tongue. Also, let the minister place the Host on your tongue; do not bite it or grab it with your lips. Do not move your head - you should not be a moving target.

I write these as a reminder and in some cases an instruction on the proper and reverent way to receive Holy Communion.

*"Let every knee bend before Thee, O greatness of my God, so supremely humbled in the Sacred Host. May every heart love Thee, every spirit adore Thee and every will be subject to Thee!"*

— St. Margaret Mary

## **SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Taken from *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Published by Tan Books.

## **PRAYER TO END THE PANDEMIC**

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas, we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness. For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust. In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy. Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

## **ANOTHER PRAYER FOR DURING THE PANDEMIC**

O clement, O loving, O sweet Mother Mary, we, your children of every nation, turn to you in this pandemic. Our troubles are numerous; our fears are great. Grant that we might deposit them at your feet, take refuge in your Immaculate Heart, and obtain peace, healing, rescue, and timely help in all our needs. You are our Mother. Pray for us to your Son. Amen.

